

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS**Examiner's Amendment**

Applicant filed an Appeal Brief for the present application on April 21, 2004.

5 After considering the Appeal Brief, the Examiner telephoned Applicant on July 7, 2004 to discuss a suggested Examiner's Amendment and the possibility of allowance with the Examiner's Amendment. Applicant thereafter requested time to consider the Examiner's Amendment, and later telephoned the Examiner to inform the Examiner that the proposed Examiner's Amendment would not be acceptable to the Applicant. Applicant further
10 informed the Examiner that Applicant wished to continue to allow the Appeal Brief to be fully considered. Unfortunately, due to a fundamental misunderstanding between the Applicant and the Examiner, the Examiner allowed the present application on July 12, 2004 and entered the Examiner's Amendment into the record.

As Applicant cannot accept the proposed Examiner's Amendment, Applicant is
15 hereby filing a Request for Continuing Examination to permit the Appeal Brief and all previously entered amendments and responses to be considered. At this time, Applicant submits a response to the previously cited arguments by the Examiner as well as the set of claims (see **Appendix A**) that Applicant wishes to pursue for the present application.

Applicant apologizes for the miscommunication and hopes that the following
20 response will be timely entered and considered to hasten the process to allowance and issuance of the present application. The Applicant thanks the Examiner for his diligence in considering the following response.

STATUS OF CLAIMS

25 Claims 1, 6, 7, 10, 16, 17, 20, and 26 are rejected.

Claims 2-5, 8, 9, 11-15, 18, 19, and 21-25 are objected to.

Claims 27 and 28 are not under any objections or rejections.

Claims 1, 6, 7, 10, 16, 17, 20, 26 are the subject of this office action. A copy of all claims of the application is contained in the attached Appendix A.

SUMMARY OF INVENTION

A method and apparatus for incorporating decision making into classifiers to provide efficient test recommendations are presented and claimed. The apparatus 5 comprises an explicit system and a classifier, each configured to receive a system state dataset, with the explicit system connected with the classifier, and operative to iteratively perform a combinatory search procedure based on the system state dataset to develop a next test recommendation for the classifier, whereby the classifier performs the next test to generate an objective weighted score. The system state dataset is typically in the form 10 of a vector representing the various features that describe the System State. The apparatus further includes a profit module connected with the classifier and with the explicit system to receive the objective weighted score from the classifier, to add subjective value to the objective weighted score to determine a profit for the test, and to provide the profit to the explicit system to enable the explicit system to assess the value 15 of its next test recommendation, and, iteratively, to generate a best test recommendation based on the maximization of the profit. The apparatus further includes an implicit system configured to receive a system state dataset, and connected with the explicit system to receive the best test recommendation for each system state dataset, and to act as a function estimator to learn to associate best test recommendations with the system state 20 dataset in order to mimic the explicit system, thereby to enable rapid decision making in situations that are either urgent or well-known.

Although the implicit system may be any probability-based learning system, it is preferably a neural network. The combinatory search procedure performed by the explicit system is preferably simulated annealing.

- 5 After the implicit system has been sufficiently trained to mimic the explicit system, the explicit system and the profit module may be separated from the implicit system in order to provide a smaller, lower cost system that approximates the performance of the overall system. This application is especially useful when the system is dealing with a fixed environment, i.e. there are few changes that would be outside the range in which the
10 implicit system was trained.

ISSUES

- Issue 1 - Whether Claims 7, 17, and 26 lack compliance with 35 USC 112, fourth paragraph, in that these claims fail to additionally limit the subject matter of the related
15 independent claim.

- Issue 2 – Whether Claims 1 and 20 and Claims 6 and 16 are indefinite under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Appellant regards as the invention. In particular, whether the terms “mimic” as used in Claims 1 and 20, and “sufficiently mimics” as used in Claims 6 and
20 16, are relative terms that render the claims indefinite.

- Issue 3 - Whether Claim 10 is indefinite under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Appellant

regards as the invention. In particular, whether the preposition “on” used in Claim 10 is confusing.

GROUPING OF CLAIMS

The grounds of rejections and objections which appellant contests herein apply to
5 more than one claim, such additional claims, to the extent separately identified and argued below, do not stand or fall together.

THE ARGUMENT

*Issue 1 - Whether Claims 7, 17, and 26 lack compliance with 35 USC 112,
fourth paragraph, in that these claims fail to additionally limit the subject matter of the
10 related independent claim.*

Claims 7 recites:

*An apparatus for incorporating decision making into classifiers to provide
efficient test recommendations as set forth in claim 1, wherein the System State is a
15 vector.*

Claim 17 recites:

*A computerized method for enhancing decision making into classifiers to provide
efficient test recommendations as set forth in claim 10, wherein the System State is a
20 vector.*

Claim 26 recites:

A computerized method for enhancing decision making in classifiers to provide efficient test recommendations as set forth in claim 20, wherein the System State is a vector.

5 In the first Office Action dated May 7, 2003, the Examiner objected to Claims 7, 17, 26 under 37 CFR 1.75(c) for lack of compliance with 35 USC 112, fourth paragraph, in that these claims fail to additionally limit the subject matter of the related independent claim. The Examiner stated that “*by definition, the system state is always a vector.*”

10 In the Response to the first Office Action dated May 7, 2003, the Appellant stated that “[t]he first partial paragraph on page 19 of the present application states, “*Note that representing the problem as a vector is appropriate only when the test costs are not affected by which other tests have already been performed.*” Thus, it is not true that the system state is always a vector as asserted by the Examiner. Therefore, the Applicant
15 submits that Claims 7, 17, and 26 are in compliance with 35 USC 112, fourth paragraph, as they additionally limit the subject matter of the related independent claim. If the Examiner still maintains his objection to these claims, the Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner point out to the Applicant his basis for his interpretation that, by definition, the system state is always a vector.”

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 In the Final Office Action of October 21, 2003, the Examiner finally objected to claims 7, 17, and 26 under 37 C.F.R. 1.75(c) for lack of compliance with 35 U.S.C. 112, fourth paragraph. The Examiner stated that “*these claims fail to additionally limit the*

subject matter of the related independent claim in that by definition the system state is always a vector.” In response to the Appellant's arguments and a request that the Examiner elaborate and clarify his basis for the objection in the First Office Action dated May 7, 2003, the Examiner further stated that “[t]o one of ordinary skill in the art, the system state is defined by n coordinates in Euclidean n-space. A vector is a well-known mathematical concept defined by n coordinates in Euclidean n-space. The well accepted methodology of vectors is commonly used to refer to the n coordinates of the system state in Euclidean n-space.”

- 10 The following are direct quotes regarding the term “vector” used throughout the disclosure:

Page 17, line 22 to page 18, line 5 states:

In the context of choosing the best subset of tests, a local search algorithm starts out at some state, typically in the form of a vector with an entry for each test indicating whether or not the given test is to be performed. The local search algorithm changes entries in the vector to indicate whether the test will be run, and accepts a change when the expected profit rises.

- 20 As the above quoted section clearly indicates, the system state is *typically* in the form of a vector, and therefore is not limited to a vector form of representation.

Page 19, lines 3 to 9 state:

“Note that representing the problem as a vector is appropriate only when the test costs are not affected by which other tests have already been performed. FIG. 3(b) represents a problem in which test costs are affected by which other tests have already been performed. In such cases, optimization occurs over a matrix.”

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The Appellant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner’s assertion that the system state is always a vector, and particularly the belief that the System State is defined by n coordinates in Euclidean n-space. The System State of the present application cannot simply be described as a vector, with values that are known and unknown. The 10 System State is in actuality much more broad in its scope, and can include multiple test dependencies which exist outside of the simple bounds of a vector. As stated on page 19, lines 3 to 9, “[n]ote that representing the problem as a vector is appropriate only when the test costs are not affected by which other tests have already been performed.” This describes the situation in which a test dependency would exist that would bring the 15 System State outside of the traditional definition of a vector. Essentially, when the system is searching for the next test to evaluate, it must navigate a matrix structure for situations in which there are test dependencies. The state of the search process is part of the System State, and therefore cannot be limited to the definition of a simple vector, which is limited to known and unknown values. Appendix B includes a declaration by 20 the inventor, one of ordinary skill in the art, as to the interpretation of the System State as more than a simple vector. Furthermore, the complete System State of the model can additionally encompass the specification of the classifier, the implicit system, and the

explicit system. Thus, the System State is not defined by n coordinates in Euclidean n-space, but is subject to a much broader interpretation.

Based on the prior comments regarding the definition and scope of the System State, Appellant believes that Claims 7, 17, and 26 are in compliance with 35 USC 112, fourth paragraph, as they additionally limit the subject matter of the related independent claim.

Issue 2 – Whether Claims 1 and 20 and Claims 6 and 16 are indefinite under 35

10 ***USC 112, second paragraph, for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Appellant regards as the invention. In particular, whether the terms “mimic” as used in Claims 1 and 20, and “sufficiently mimics” as used in Claims 6 and 16, are relative terms that render the claims indefinite.***

15 **Claim 1 recites, inter alia:**

“...an implicit system configured to receive a system state dataset, and connected with the explicit system to receive the best test recommendation for each system state dataset, and to act as a function estimator to learn to associate best test recommendations with the system state dataset in order to mimic the explicit system, thereby to enable rapid decision making in situations that are either urgent or well-known.”

Claim 20 recites, inter alia:

“*...providing an implicit system configured to receive a system state dataset, and connected with the explicit system to receive the best test recommendation for each system state dataset, and to act as a function estimator to learn to associate best test recommendations with the system state dataset in order to mimic the explicit system, thereby to enable rapid decision making in situations that are either urgent or well-known.*”

In the first Office Action dated May 7, 2003, the Examiner rejected Claims 1 and 20 under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Appellant regards as the invention. The Examiner stated that “*At Claim 6, line 4 the term “mimic” is used which is a relative term and renders the [sic]claim indefinite.*”

Appellant believes the Examiner has made an error in arguing claim 6 under the 35 USC 112, second paragraph, rejection of claims 1 and 20. The term “mimic” appears in paragraph “c” of both claims 1 and 20. In Response to the First Office Action, the Appellant respectfully disagreed with the Examiner, and stated that “[t]he present application, page 16, lines 15-17 states “*Although the explicit system 202 uses a combinatorial process to determine the best test or tests to run, over time the implicit system 206 learns to mimic the performance of the explicit system 202.*” The Applicant is unclear why the Examiner has asserted that the term “mimic” is relative. The Applicant respectfully requests that if the Examiner continues this rejection of Claims 1 and 20 based on the term “mimic” that the Examiner explain why he believes the term is

relative. Because the term "mimic" is used in a definable context in the present application, the Applicant submits that one skilled in the art would understand what the term "mimic" means and thus, the term "mimic" is not indefinite. Therefore, the Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw this rejection of Claims 1 and 5 20."

In the Final Office Action, dated October 21, 2003, the Examiner finally rejected Claims 1 and 20 under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the Appellant regards 10 as the invention. The Examiner stated that "...To one of ordinary skill in the art, the term "mimic" introduces the concept of imitation and with the concept of imitation comes the question of "how much"? Since such a term introduces a sliding scale of interpretation, by consequence the claim is indefinite."

15 Claim 6 recites:

"An apparatus for incorporating decision making into classifiers to provide efficient test recommendations as set forth in claim 5, wherein the explicit system and the profit module may be separated from the apparatus after the implicit system sufficiently mimics the explicit system."

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Claim 16 recites:

"A computerized method for enhancing decision making in a classifier system as set forth in claim 15, wherein the explicit system and the profit module used may be

separated from the classifier system after the implicit system sufficiently mimics the explicit system.”

In the first Office Action, dated May 7, 2003, the Examiner rejected Claims 6 and 5 16 under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Appellant regards as the invention. The Examiner stated that “*At Claim 6, line 4 the term “sufficiently mimics” is used which is a relative term and renders the claims indefinite. Claim 16 has a similar reference.*”

10 In Response to the First Office Action, the Appellant respectfully disagreed with the Examiner, and stated that “*The Applicant disagrees for the same reasons given above with reference to claims 1 and 20. Therefore, the Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw this rejection of claims 6 and 16.*”

15 The following are direct quotes regarding the term “mimic” used throughout the disclosure:

Page 16, lines 14+:

“*Although the explicit system 202 uses a combinatorial process to determine the best test or tests to run, over time the implicit system 206 learns to mimic the performance of the explicit system 202. In situations that are familiar or when a very fast approximation to the performance of the explicit system 202 is required, the implicit system can be used to provide the final decision. In cases where there are a limited number of possible*

situations, the explicit system 202 may be removed after the implicit system 206 has been fully trained.”

Page 20, lines 15+:

- 5 *“The implicit system compliments the explicit system by providing almost instantaneous test recommendations. The implicit subsystem is a function approximator that, over time, learns to approximate the performance of the explicit system. Thus, the explicit system provides the teaching signal for the implicit system, which will be discussed in greater detail further below.”*

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Page 26, lines 4+:

- “In time critical situations, the implicit system can be queried, while the explicit system can be queried when time is not of the essence. When processor load is low, the explicit system can provide training data to refine the implicit system. In an alternative 15 embodiment, such as a deployed system with limited processing power, the implicit system can be completely trained by the explicit system while off-line, and the present invention may be deployed without the explicit system.”*

Page 27, lines 1-3:

- 20 *“After some training, this input/output mapping closely approximates the output of the explicit system, but requires less computation.”*

Appellant asserts that the term “mimic” is not relative to the point that the claims are rendered indefinite. To one of ordinary skill in the art, the notion of a learning model coming to approximate, estimate, or mimic some underlying function is accepted in machine learning and statistics (See Appendix B). In the present invention, the function 5 being approximated is the one defined by the input/output mapping of the explicit system, as stated in the application on page 20, lines 15 – 19 (see *infra* page 12). In each application of the learning model, there will be different costs associated with gathering training data, making timely predictions, and making errors. The present invention provides for these varying costs by adjusting the amount of the explicit system to be 10 mimicked by the implicit system, as stated in the disclosure on page 16, lines 14 – 20 and page 26, lines 4 – 9 (see *infra* page 12). Thus, what constitutes adequate mimicry cannot be defined outside of the context of a specific application, since the costs associated with gathering the data, processing the information, and making accurate predictions will vary for each application. While mimicking the outputs of the system 60% of the time may be 15 sufficient in some situations, matching the outputs 99.9% of the time may be inadequate in others. Therefore, to be specific as to the amount of mimicry occurring would be unnecessarily limiting, as the amount of mimicry varies depending on the type and amount of data and the desire for efficiency based upon the resources available to the system at any time.

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Appellant thus believes that the terms “mimic,” as used in Claims 1 and 20, and “sufficiently mimics”, as used in Claims 6 and 16 is not indefinite under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, for the reasons discussed above.

Issue 3 - Whether Claim 10 is indefinite under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Appellant regards as the invention. In particular, whether the preposition "on" used in

5 *Claim 10 is confusing.*

Claim 10 recites:

"A computerized method for enhancing decision making in a classifier system, wherein the classifier system includes an explicit system and a classifier, each configured

10 *to receive a system state dataset, with the explicit system connected with the classifier; a profit module connected with the classifier and with the explicit system; and an implicit system configured to receive a system state dataset, and connected with the explicit system, the computerized method comprising the steps of:*

15 *a. receiving a system state dataset in the explicit system, the classifier, and the implicit system;*

b. determining in the explicit system, based on the feature set, a recommended test;

c. performing the recommended test on the classifier;

20 *d. determining, via the profit module, the profit from the test performed on the classifier;*

e. detecting whether the test performed on the classifier maximizes the profit;

- f. performing the receiving step a through the detecting step e until a test is found which maximizes the profit;*
- g. training the implicit system with the system state dataset and the test which maximizes the profit; and*
- 5 *h. repeating steps a through g until a desired level of training of the implicit system is reached."*

In the First Office action, dated May 7, 2003, the Examiner rejected Claim 10 under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point 10 out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Appellant regards as the invention. The Examiner stated that “[a]t Claim 10, lines 10-13, the use of the preposition “on” is confusing [sic]it is really the classifier that is evaluating the test...perhaps the word “by” could be used as a replacement. Without such change, the claim is indefinite.”

15 In Response to the First Office Action, the Appellant stated that “*The last paragraph on page 15 of the present application states, ‘The explicit system 202 runs virtual or hypothetical tests on the classifier 200, which, in essence, acts as a model of the world in which the system operates.’ Thus, as disclosed in the present application, the tests are preformed on the classifier. The Applicant submits that the use of the 20 preposition “on” is appropriate in this case. Therefore, the Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw this rejection to Claim 10.*”

In the Final Office Action, dated October 21, 2003, the Examiner finally rejected Claim 10 under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Appellant regards as the invention. The Examiner repeated the reasoning given in First Office Action, and 5 further stated that “...[s]pecification, Fig. 2 applies. Note that the Explicit System is separate and distinct from that of the Classifier. This means that the Classifier will run the recommended test. Hence, the word “by” is correct. These comments apply to steps c, d, and e of claim 10. See also claim 1, step a wherein ‘classifier performs.’“

- 10 The following are direct quotes regarding the term “on” with respect to the classifier used throughout the disclosure:

Page 15, lines 20+:

- “The explicit system 202 runs virtual or hypothetical tests on the classifier 200, which, in 15 essence, acts as a model of the world in which the system operates.”

Page 16, lines 2-9:

- “The profit module 204 tempers the output of the classifier 200 in order to add subjective cost information relative to the set of tests performed in order to determine the profit 20 received by performing the set of tests, i.e. output of the profit module 204 reflects the fact that with each test, there is an associated cost, and that accuracy must be sacrificed if the cost of the test is simply too high to bear. The output of the profit module 204 is provided to the explicit system 202 so that the explicit system 202 may use the feedback to

set benchmarks en route to maximizing the profit from the tests. After performing a set of tests based on the feature set input, the explicit system 202 reaches a final decision of the best test or tests to run.”

5 Page 25, lines 5-8:

“The classifier 200 is used essentially as a model of the task environment, or world, with experiments being run on the classifier to make predictions about what will transpire in the actual environment. The more veridical the classifier 200 is, the more accurate its predictions will be.”

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Page 26, lines 21+:

“In effect, the classifier is used as a model of the task environment and the present invention runs experiments on this model to determine what action to perform next.”

15 The present application discloses in Claim 10 and throughout the disclosure that the Explicit System performs the recommended test on the Classifier. Specifically, where Claim 10 states in steps b and c, “b. determining in the explicit system, based on the feature set, a recommended test; c. performing the recommended test on the classifier;” the implication of these sections of the claim is that the Explicit System determines a
20 recommended test and thereafter performs the recommended test on the Classifier. The steps of the Explicit System performing a test upon the Classifier are further described in the specification at Page 15, line 20 – 21, which explains how “[t]he explicit system 202

runs virtual or hypothetical tests on the classifier 200, which, in essence, acts as a model of the world in which the system operates.” While the Examiner cites to Fig. 2 of the Specification for the assertion that the Explicit System is separate and distinct from the Classifier, this does not refute the fact that the Explicit System still performs the 5 recommended test on the Classifier as denoted in Claim 10 and throughout the above-referenced sections of the specification.

In Claim 1, step a, which states “an explicit system and a classifier each configured to receive a system state dataset, *with the explicit system connected with the classifier, and operative to iteratively perform a combinatory search procedure based on the system state dataset to develop a next test recommendation for the classifier*, whereby 10 the classifier performs the next test to generate an objective weighted score;” (italics not present in original), the Explicit System is described as connected with the Classifier, where the Explicit System functions to run a test to determine the appropriate test to run on the Classifier, with the Classifier thereafter performing the test part of providing the 15 output of the test to generate the objective weighted score. While admittedly confusing in that the Claim can be interpreted to see the Classifier performing the entire recommended test from the Explicit System, in actuality, the test is performed by the Explicit System on the Classifier, and part of the test “performed” by the Classifier is only the output of the objective weighted score and essentially the profit from the test 20 performed.

In conclusion, the use of the word “on” in Claim 10 is consistent with the specification and the overall model of the present invention, in that the Explicit System

performs the recommended test on the Classifier in order to provide the Classifier with a profit and cost estimate of performing the actual test in the real world. While the Classifier “performs” the function of assembling the profit from the test performed, the overall test is performed by the Explicit System “on” the Classifier to eventually

5 determine which test maximizes the profit and thus which test to then recommend to the Implicit System. Thus, the use of the word “on” is appropriate.

Claim 10 therefore satisfies the requirements of 35 USC 112, second paragraph.

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Concluding Remarks:

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that all now pending claims 1 – 12 are in allowable condition. Reconsideration is respectfully requested. Accordingly, 5 early allowance and issuance of this application is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner have any questions regarding this response or need any additional information, please contact the undersigned at (310) 589-8158.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required or credit overpayment to deposit account no. 50-2691. In particular, if this 10 response is not timely filed, the Commissioner is authorized to treat this response as including a petition to extend the time period pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) requesting an extension of time of the number of months necessary to make this response timely filed and the petition fee due in connection therewith may be charged to deposit account no. 50-2691.

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Respectfully submitted,

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Date

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